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Coup Underscores Deep Divisions In Russian Society

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Coup Underscores Deep Divisions In Russian Society

The military coup in Moscow dramatizes with stunning force the deep divisions that threaten to splinter the U.S.S.R. The Russian and Ukrainian people are polarized on almost every fundamental issue confronting their society, according to a Times Mirror survey conducted in May of 1991.

More than 60 percent of the Russian people support multi-party pluralism, but two out of every five Russians favor a strong leader, rather than democratic government, to solve the nation's problems.

Support for democracy is greatest in Moscow and Leningrad, in whose streets the drama of Gorbachev's future may be played out, rather than in the countryside (over 67% vs. 46%). The younger and most educated Russians, who are the most politically active force in the republic, are most supportive of democracy. 75% of Russians 25 years and younger approve of a multi-party system of government.

Conversely, of those who disapproved of political pluralism, 62 percent want a strong leader, Russians told the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press in May during a survey of attitudes and values across the European continent. At that time, Gorbachev's approval rating stood at only 27%.

Russians are evenly split on whether the KGB secret police is a good or bad influence in their country: 29% say good, 25% bad, and 30% say "don't know" to this highly sensitive question. Their view toward the Soviet Red Army is more positive -- 45% favorable, 25% unfavorable, and 12% don't knows.

Russians give a massive vote of no-confidence to the Communist Party, with more than one in three saying they rely on it least to see the nation through its turmoil. And they do not see the KGB, Army or Central authorities capable of solving the nation's problems either. When asked who they can rely on least, Russians cite the KGB, the Red Army and the Central authorities at roughly the same low levels.

The Russian people place their most faith (45%) in the Russian Republic's authorities, far more than in any other institution. Two out of three Russians express strong support for independence for their republic, including freedom of their economy and resources from the Central authorities. But the same proportion also wants Russia to remain a part of a looser Soviet Union of the kind envisaged under the all-Union treaty that was to have been signed in Moscow tomorrow (Aug. 20).

Support for democracy is greater among backers of Russian President Boris Yeltsin (73%) than backers of Gorbachev (54%); similarly, support for free markets is marginally greater among Yeltsin than Gorbachev backers (61% vs. 52%, respectively). Only one-third of those who still back the Communist Parties approve both the political and economic changes.

While the Russian attitude toward a strong leader was probed as an alternative to democracy, the rising crime and general disruption of their society may also influence the responses. Eight out of 10 Russians say the political and economic changes have been detrimental to law and order.

The same percentages believe the changes have had a bad effect on inter-ethnic relations, and more than 8 in 10 believe internal strife is a greater danger to the future of their country than foreign threats.

Few Russians saw the coup coming, it appears. Only 15% said they worried that political libealization would not continue, and 19% were afraid political repression would come.

The Times Mirror survey also found differences in levels of support for political change compared to economic change, i.e., more favorable to democracy rather than economic restructuring. Political changes are more popular than the economic changes by 61% to 54%.

One of the survey's most important findings is that more than one third of Russians (and slightly more Ukrainians) say the changes have had a positive influence on "how I think about things." The people have clearly been shaken up by the sweeping reforms instituted by Gorbachev, although their deep-rooted feelings about the subservience of individual to state, egalitarianism and individualism may be resurrected in the wake of the military coup.

The prospect of civil war and economic issues dominate Russian fears of the future. More than one out of four fear civil strife. Russians fearing civil war are equally divided among those favoring a strong leader rather than democratic process, although among Ukrainians fearing civil war, a significantly greater number favor democracy rather than strong leaders (53% and 34%, respectively.)

Ukrainians, in comparison to the Russians, are more pro-independence, more pro-pluralism, more for economic reform, although less for a strong leader. Thirty percent of the Ukrainians favor a strong hand, rather than reliance on democratic processes, compared to 39% Russians.

In Russia, the barest majority opt for democracy rather than a strong leader (51% rather than 39%), with a higher level among Ukrainians (57% vs. 30%).

With respect to the media, now muzzled by the coup leaders, sizeable majorities in both Russia and the Ukraine disapprove of putting greater constraints and control on what newspapers print (66% in Russia, 70% in the Ukraine). Moreover, Russians by a two to one margin say radio and TV are having a good influence on their country -- before the coup.

SOVIET SURVEY METHODOLOGY

I. Interviewing, Sample Design and Statistical Adjustments

Face-to-face personal interviews with representative samples of the adult public were conducted simultaneously in three republics of the U.S.S.R. - the European part of Russia, the Ukraine and Lithuania. The Russian and Ukrainian surveys were conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Sociology of the USSR, Academy of Sciences. The Lithuanian survey was conducted by the Sociological Laboratory of Vilnius University.

The Russian and Ukrainian Survey

As this survey was part of a comparative European study the Russian sample was limited to the European part of the Republic. Although the European part of the RSFSR is only one third of the whole territory of the Russian Republic (the latter being 17,075,400 square km or 6,592,849 square miles), approximately two-thirds of the population of the Russian Republic live in the European part of Russia, which embraces the territory from the Baltic to the Urals. The survey is projectible to the 70 million adults aged 18 and older living in this part of the Russian Republic.

In the Ukraine, the survey covered the whole republic, and is projectible to 38 million adults aged 18 & older.

In RSFSR, 1,123 interviews were conducted in the following regions (oblasts) - Moscow (378), Leningrad (215), Samara (75), Volgograd (133), Kirov (70), Vladimir (39), Pskov (60), Severo-Osetinskaja (78) and Karelia (52), both autonomous republics. In each region, different types of cities, towns and villages were covered; a) a city with the population one million and over, usually the capital city of a region [oblast or autonomous republic]; b) a city with a population of 1,000,000 - 500,000; c) a city with a population of 500,000 to 100,000; d) a city with a population of less than 100,000; (e) a village.

The regions of Moscow and Leningrad were deliberately chosen and oversampled for special analysis, as they represent the parts of RSFSR where the move toward political and economic change is more noticeable. Other oblasts, and also cities and towns in each oblast were randomly selected. Villages were usually chosen because of their vicinity to medium-sized and small towns in oblasts.

Districts in cities and towns were chosen at random (8 in Moscow, 6 in Donetsk, 5 in Leningrad, 5 in Kiev, 4 in Lugansk, 4 in Volgograd, 3 in Samara, 3 in Kirov, 3 in Gouse-Kchrustanij, 3 in Pskov, 3 in Petrozavodsk, 3 in Vladikavkas and 3 in each of the smaller cities. In each district, the addresses and names were selected at random out of election lists and no fewer than three election stations were taken.

The interviewers had the lists of randomly selected respondents with the name, address and year of birth of each respondent given (the age limit on this survey was 80 years). They were also given an additional list which is comprised of additional names which were to be used in case of refusals or long absences of respondents. In case of the absence of a respondent, an interviewer was supposed to come back twice more, and then if a respondent was still unavailable, the interviewer moved on to the next name on the additional list.

In small towns and villages with a small number of interviews, the random route procedure was used to select a household and, of the members of that household, the interviewer first applied to a younger man in the family, and in case of his absence, an older woman in the family.

The demographic parameters were checked by the field managers according to the quota of distribution of demographic characteristics - gender, age, urban/rural type of population.

Interviews were conducted in 99 sampling points in the period between April 15, 1991 and May 5, 1991. The interviews were conducted on weekdays between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. and on weekends between 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

In the Ukraine, the sample of 586 people covered 4 major parts:

1. Industrial and mining, which was represented by two big oblasts - Lugansk (151) and Donetsk (30);
2. Central part - Kiev (122), Kirovograd (49), Tchernigov (49) oblasts;
3. South - Odessa (29) and Nikolajev (46);
4. Western Ukraine - Carpathian oblasts (53), Lvov (72) oblasts.

Interviews were conducted in 64 sampling points in the period between April 15, 1991 and May 5, 1991.

For the survey, 99 local interviewers were employed in the Russian Republic and 59 interviewers in the Ukraine. There were two general managers of the fieldwork, one for RSFSR and one for the Ukraine, and also managers for each oblasts. The fieldwork in Moscow, Volgograd, Osetija and Vladimir oblasts (Gouse-Kchrustanij) was supervised by the Moscow team [ROMIR and Institute of Sociology representatives]). Fieldwork in Leningrad, Pskov and Karelija regions was supervised by the Leningrad team. Fieldwork in Samara and Kirov was supervised by the local managers. Fieldwork in the Ukraine was supervised by the Lugansk University team.

Training of the fieldwork managers was conducted by the Institute of Sociology on April 9, 1991 by Soviet project leader, Dr. Elena Bashkirova. Training of the interviewers for Moscow and Vladimir oblasts was conducted in Moscow during the week of April 9 - 12, 1991 by ROMIR and the Institute of Sociology. Training of interviewers for Leningrad, Karelija and Pskov region was conducted in Leningrad and

training of interviewers for Volgograd, Samara, Kirov and Osetija was conducted in hese cities between April 10 - 12, 1991.

Training of fieldwork managers for the Ukraine was conducted on April 11, 1991 in Kiev by Dr. S. Milogolov, and training of the interviewers was carried out in the local places on April 12 - 15, 1991.

The interviewers who conducted interviews were mainly professionals who were experienced in face-to-face interviews and already used by the Institute of Sociology and ROMIR Company - researchers for the Institute of Sociology, Moscow, Leningrad, Kirov, Lugansk, Kiev and Vladikavkas Universities and part-time interviewers working for ROMIR (Moscow) and SOCIO (Samara).

The field managers controlled the interviewers' work by visiting randomly at least 10% of the respondents (in larger cities - such as Moscow, Leningrad, Volgograd and Samara - 5% of interviews were checked by telephone). Biases in samples were controlled by the field manager according to quota distribution of main socio-demographic parameters: gender, age and rural/urban type of population.

The questionnaires collected and checked by the local field managers were then brought to Moscow to the Institute of Sociology, where both sets of questionnaires were coded (Ukrainian questionnaires were coded by people whose native tongue is Ukrainian). The questionnaire was comprised of 15 open-ended questions, 9 of which were pre-coded (nationality, occupation of respondent, lists of countries, soviet republics, occupation preferences for their children); for 6 questions, code-books were done on the basis of 300 questionnaires in RSFSR and 150 questionnaires in the Ukraine. For two questions (What are your hopes for the future and what do you need to be happy?) a list of codes for other countries was used as a starting point which served quite well and then they were supplemented by a few other codes marked specifically as Russian or Ukrainian.

The open-ended questions were coded, the data punched and data filed in ASCII format and then sent to the U.S.

The general supervision of the survey conducted in the Russian Republic and the Ukraine was carried out by Dr. Elena Bashkirova, a head of department of the Institute of Sociology and the Director of ROMIR Company, which is an independent research company for Russian public opinion and market research.

Russian survey results were statistically adjusted to take into account the oversampling of the Moscow and Leningrad regions (600 interviews). The 500 interviews obtained in the 40 primary sampling units within seven other oblasts (regions) were statistically weighted to represent 77% of the total sample. Survey results from Russia and the Ukraine were compared to official statistics on age, sex, education and degree of urbanization. Subsequently, it was deemed necessary only to statistically weight the results of the Russian and Ukrainian surveys to account for an

over-representation of well-educated people (not unlike the level of over-representation found in American surveys).

The Lithuanian Survey

The survey is based on a republic wide personal interview survey that embraced the adult population, aged 16 years and older, in all five ethnic regions of Lithuania.

Given the degree to which ethnicity is an important factor differentiating the opinions of inhabitants of the Republic, non-Lithuanians, Russians and Poles were oversampled.

The field interviewing was carried out in 50 primary sampling units by trained interviewers from the Sociological Laboratory of Vilnius University. Interviews were conducted in Lithuanian and Russian languages. Households were drawn on a "random route basis". One interview was conducted per household and age and sex quotas were used to select respondents within the household.

The sample of primary sampling units was drawn at random based on the latest Lithuanian Census data on sex, age, nationality, and urban-rural structure. Russians and Poles were oversampled so as to have a sufficient number for analysis. A total of 501 interviews were conducted, 332 with Lithuanians, 68 Russians, and 87 Poles. The sample was statistically weighted to account for this ethnic disproportionality. Given the completeness and recent nature of the census data, the survey data was statistically fit to an age, sex, and education model after the ethnic weighting was accomplished.

II. The Questionnaire

The initial draft of the questionnaire was developed by the ***Times Mirror Center For The People & The Press***. It was designed to facilitate cross-national comparisons of results amongst European countries and between European and American opinions. However, about a third of the questions in each survey are unique to each country, or Soviet republic under study. Many of the comparative questions in the survey were based upon measures developed by Times Mirror for its ***People, Press and Politics*** survey series.

A draft of the questionnaire was submitted in October of 1990 to a committee of European survey researchers consisting of the project leaders from each country included in the survey. Comments and suggestions were solicited and a second draft of the survey instrument was re-submitted to the European research group for pretesting. Pre-tests were conducted in December of 1990.

Final questionnaires were prepared based on results of the pretest and with the guidance and assistance of the European project leader group. The final questionnaire was submitted to each country in English On April 1, 1991. Drafts were returned to the Times Mirror Center For The People & The Press in local languages which were translated back into English as a check for language comparability.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TIMES MIRROR CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
EAST/WEST POLL - TOPLINE
RUSSIA AND THE UKRAINE

Q.200 Overall, do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of the political and economic changes that have taken place in _____ over the past year or so?

	Russia	Ukraine
Total Approve	30	35
1 Strongly approve	2	2
2 Approve	28	33
Total Disapprove	56	57
3 Disapprove	41	46
4 Strongly disapprove	14	11
9 Dk	14	8
	100	100

Q.203 Overall, do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of efforts to establish a multiparty system in our country?

	Russia	Ukraine
Total Approve	60	72
1 Strongly approve	21	21
2 Approve	39	51
Total Disapprove	26	18
3 Disapprove	19	15
4 Strongly disapprove	7	3
9 Dk	14	10
	100	100

Q.204 Overall, do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of efforts to establish a free market economy in ...?

	Russia	Ukraine
Total Approve	54	53
1 Strongly approve	15	13
2 Approve	39	40
Total Disapprove	33	34
3 Disapprove	24	26
4 Strongly disapprove	9	8
9 Dk	13	13
	100	100

Q.207 **(HAND RESPONDENT CARD B)** Who can we most rely on to help deal with the problems facing this country in the future. And who would you name next? And who can we rely on least?

	Russia	Ukraine
a. The Central authorities		
First Choice	27	24
Second Choice	18	29
Rely on least	7	9
b. The Republic's authorities		
First Choice	45	58
Second Choice	20	22
Rely on least	3	2
c. The Soviet Army		
First Choice	6	4
Second Choice	10	4
Rely on least	8	8
d. The Communist Party		
First Choice	2	2
Second Choice	5	6
Rely on least	35	29

CONTINUED.....

Q.207 CONTINUED....

	Russia	Ukraine
e. The Church		
First Choice	3	1
Second Choice	12	9
Rely on least	13	13
f. The KGB		
First Choice	1	1
Second Choice	3	2
Rely on least	9	16
g. None chosen first (VOLUNTEERED)	7	6
None chosen second	9	9
None chosen least	5	4
No answer	7	3

Q.208 Do you favor or oppose an independent _____ Republic?/Q.209 Are you positive of your opinion or not?

	Russia	Ukraine
Total Favor	65	71
1 Favor positively	59	64
Total Oppose	20	20
2 Oppose positively	16	16
9 No opinion	15	9
	100	100

Q.210 Why do you think so?

	Russia	Ukraine
An independent republic will be able to solve its problems more quickly	11	16
Independence makes it easier to solve one's economic problems	7	10
Russia (Ukraine) was not well-off within the structure of the Union	2	8
Russia (Ukraine) should remain a member of the USSR since it is impossible to manage without political and economic relations with other republics	6	9
The Union should be preserved for the sake of power	5	5
An independent state is easier to rule	2	6
Russian (Ukrainian) people should have their statehood	5	9
Russia (Ukraine) does not have to feed anyone else, nor does it have to share its resources	5	8
There should be less pressure and dictates from centralized powers	4	4
A rich country should not have to be dependent on anyone else	4	12
Russia (Ukraine) and other republics should have more economic freedom	4	1
Centralized power gets in the way of the republics' normal development	1	4
Russia (Ukraine) gives too much resources to the Union budget	2	3
The Union should not be destroyed, but more economic freedom could be given to Russia (Ukraine)	1	3
Republics should help each other	2	1
If the Union disintegrates, then everyone will lose	2	3
Other	12	8
Not reported	30	20

Q.211a **(HAND RESPONDENT CARD C)** Which of these would be your first choice for the future?

	Russia
1 Russia remains part of the Soviet Union and the Central government is further strengthened	11
2 Russia remains a member of the Soviet Union, but with much more independence and authority	64
3 Russia leaves the Soviet Union to become a completely independent country	19
9 No opinion	6
	100

Q.216a **(HAND RESPONDENT CARD E)** Of the items listed on this card, which is your greatest worry about the future? And which is second?

	Russia	Ukraine
a. We will not solve our economic problems		
Greatest worry	45	41
Second	18	21
b. Political liberalization will not continue		
Greatest worry	3	4
Second	12	12
c. There will be political repression		
Greatest worry	6	5
Second	12	12
d. This republic will not achieve its independence from the Soviet Union		
Greatest worry	3	12
Second	6	16
e. There will be a further breakdown in law and order		
Greatest worry	12	11
Second	24	20
f. There will be an all out civil war		
Greatest worry	28	26
Second	17	14
Don't know - greatest worry	3	1
Don't know - second greatest worry	10	6

Q.224 **(HAND RESPONDENT CARD C)** Have the changes that have taken place in _____ over the past year or so had a very good influence, a good influence, bad influence or a very bad influence on the following?

	Russia	Ukraine
a. How hard people work		
Very Good Influence	1	*
Good Influence	8	7
Bad Influence	42	59
Very Bad Influence	28	19
No Influence (VOL)	15	11
DK	6	4
	100	100
b. Law and order –		
Very Good Influence	1	*
Good Influence	6	7
Bad Influence	48	62
Very Bad Influence	32	23
No Influence (VOL)	9	6
DK	4	2
	100	100
c. Caring about other people in the society		
Very Good Influence	1	0
Good Influence	18	8
Bad Influence	40	53
Very Bad Influence	23	30
No Influence (VOL)	12	7
DK	6	2
	100	100
d. Family values		
Very Good Influence	1	1
Good Influence	13	13
Bad Influence	39	49
Very Bad Influence	14	10
No Influence (VOL)	23	17
DK	10	10
	100	100

*Less than .5%

	Russia	Ukraine
e. Spiritual values		
Very Good Influence	3	2
Good Influence	24	25
Bad Influence	30	41
Very Bad Influence	18	15
No Influence (VOL)	13	6
DK	12	11
	100	100
f. The standard of living		
Very Good Influence	*	*
Good Influence	2	2
Bad Influence	34	36
Very Bad Influence	56	57
No Influence (VOL)	3	2
DK	5	3
	100	100
g. Public morality		
Very Good Influence	1	*
Good Influence	6	8
Bad Influence	42	49
Very Bad Influence	34	28
No Influence (VOL)	9	5
DK	8	10
	100	100
h. Civic pride		
Very Good Influence	1	1
Good Influence	7	10
Bad Influence	41	44
Very Bad Influence	28	29
No Influence	14	8
DK	9	8
	100	100

*Less than .5%

	Russia	Ukraine
i. How well people get along with one another		
Very Good Influence	1	*
Good Influence	5	7
Bad Influence	50	59
Very Bad Influence	33	25
No Influence	7	6
DK	4	3
	100	100
j. Relations between _____ and other ethnic groups in our country		
Very Good Influence	*	*
Good Influence	5	10
Bad Influence	46	53
Very Bad Influence	33	23
No Influence	9	7
DK	7	7
	100	100
k. How you think about things		
Very Good Influence	7	6
Good Influence	29	35
Bad Influence	18	24
Very Bad Influence	8	3
No Influence	22	18
DK	16	14
	100	100

*Less than .5%

Q.225 What's the greater threat to the future of _____ - is it from other countries or is it from groups within the country?

		Russia	Ukraine
1	Other countries	5	4
2	Groups inside	84	82
9	Can't say	11	14
		100	100

Q.227 Some feel that we should rely on a Democratic form of government to solve our country's problems. Others feel that we should rely on a leader with a strong hand to solve our country's problems. Which comes closer to your opinion?

		Russia	Ukraine
1	Democratic form of government	51	57
2	Strong leader	39	30
9	No opinion	10	13
		100	100